



# BRITISH COLUMBIA CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Representing the Beef Cattle Industry of British Columbia

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March 20, 2023

**Honourable Bruce Ralston**  
**Minister of Forests**  
PO BOX 9049, STN PROV GOVT.  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2  
Email: [FOR.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:FOR.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

BCCA File: 2023-016  
SENT BY EMAIL

Dear Minister Ralston:

**RE: Inquiry about Contravention of the Range Act, Section 23**  
**Delay in Providing Sufficient Notice of Grazing Tenure Replacement**

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The BC Cattlemen's Association is writing to you with urgency regarding systematic delays in renewing grazing tenure renewals in the BC Peace River district.

We ask for your assistance in providing an explanation about two matters:

- 1) The pending renewal of RAN074995 Grazing Tenure for Crystal Springs Ranch; and
- 2) Broader implications for all grazing tenure renewals in the Peace River district.

On the first matter, the ministry is delayed in providing sufficient notice to the tenure holder regarding replacement of RAN074995. The tenure holders, Christa and Eckbert Weitzel and Georg Weitzel of Crystal Springs Ranch, are members of our Association and have provided us with a copy of a letter written to District Manger Chris van Dolah and Director of Range David Borth. A copy has been enclosed for your easy reference. Since meeting with the Range Officer last June, the Weitzels have inquired three times about the status of their tenure renewal. They have yet to receive replies to their Oct 10 and Nov 25, 2022 email inquiries to range staff in Dawson Creek.

Under Section 23 of the *Range Act*, the Minister has a legal obligation to offer in writing to the holder of the licence a replacement "*during the 12 month period beginning 2 years before the expiry of the term of a licence*".

The Weitzel's licence expires in less than 4 months. The uncertainty about the status of their tenure is causing unnecessary stress on their family. The Weitzels are good stewards of the range resource who regularly maintain fences and infrastructure, this delay in replacement is not warranted.

The lack of response by the ministry is causing speculation within the broader ranching community about possible reasons. Leading people within the community to speculate that this is the result of the Supreme Court decision on the *Yahey v. British Columbia* and the subsequent moratorium on approval of resource permits. A perception such as this could have long-lasting impacts.

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We urge you to investigate the status of the grazing licence renewals in the Peace River district and ensure that licence holders receive renewal notice within the time period as specified in the *Range Act*. We ask that the Weitzels receive a reply as soon as possible and that range tenure holders throughout the district are provided an explanation of the status their licence replacement along with reasons for any delays.

On the second matter, the Association is concerned that other grazing tenure licences may face the same delays and impacts due to lack of notification on renewal delays.

We respectfully submit this request to your office in the hope that it may receive the attention it deserves.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian Thomas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a blue highlight behind the name.

Brian Thomas, President  
BC Cattlemen's Association

*Encl./1 – copy of Weitzel's letter*

cc: *Christa and Eckbert Weitzel (via email: ECWeitzel@live.ca)*  
*Georg Weitzel (via email: weitzel.georg@gmail.com)*